

REPORT TO THE NH CITIZENS COMMISSION ON THE STATE COURTS

12/18/06

I. Customer Service

Recommendation

Schedule

Action by Judicial Branch

FY 2008

FY 2009

FY 2010

FY 2011

FY 2012

FY 2013

1	Designate a helper at each court house.	*	*					The Probate Court has created a "Service Center Coordinator" position based at Rockingham Probate Court and serving litigants in all ten counties. The Probate Court proposes to install an 800 number for this position. The Superior Court and the District Court are considering the benefits of such a position in their jurisdictions.
2	Designate a case manager at each Family Division site.	\$396,793	\$460,715	*	*	*	*	We are requesting funds with which to hire three Family Division case managers in FY 08 and one Family Division case manager in FY 09. In addition, we are requesting funds with which to hire four case managers in the Superior Court and two case managers in the Probate Court in FY 2008.
3	Establish a toll free help line.	See #1 Above	*	*	*	*	*	The Probate Court proposes to establish a toll free help line for access to its newly created Service Center Coordinator. The Judicial Branch is planning to publicize clerks' and registers' email addresses to enhance accessibility.
4	Create a Judicial Branch Ombudsman Office							The Administrative Council considered this recommendation and concluded an Ombudsmen position would introduce unnecessary and costly administrative layer between the public and court officials. Instead, our strategy is to improve public access to court administrators. The Judicial Branch will increase access to subject matter experts by promoting communications through email, telephone, and letter with clerks, registers, and administrators.
5	Establish fixed and non-traditional court hours.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Office of the Courts is drafting a proposal for flexible employee work hours and is looking into other States' experience with non-traditional court hours.
6	Create judicial facilities with greater attention to litigant needs.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Office of the Courts is developing Court Facilities Standards that will provide architects and the Bureau of Court Facilities with formal guidance in courthouse construction and renovation to make sure litigants' needs are met.
7	Deploy ODYSSEY within two years.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Supreme Court convened multiple meetings in the summer of 2006 to determine whether we could accelerate deployment of ODYSSEY, the new case management system. The Court concluded costs of acceleration would be prohibitive and instead adopted a plan to maximize ODYSSEY's many functions while it is being deployed.
8	Expand audio teleconferencing.	*	*	*	*	*	*	A proposal to amend Superior Court Rule 62 to increase teleconferencing in civil cases is before the Supreme Court Rules Committee. The Probate Court is working with CourtCall to promote teleconferencing in probate cases. The District Courts and the Family Division are considering use of CourtCall.
9	Expand video teleconferencing.	\$30,000	\$5,000	\$	\$	\$	\$	The Judicial Branch is requesting funds in the 2008 appropriation to support installation of video teleconferencing in two rural counties.
10	Improve Judicial Branch website.	\$32,295	\$32,295	\$	\$	\$	\$	The Judicial Branch has requested funds with which to hire a part-time website support person.

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1	Screen scheduling notices for attorney conflicts.	Unavailable	*	\$	*	*	*	ODYSSEY has the capacity to record attorneys' vacation schedules and "flag" conflicts when a court assistant schedules a matter during an attorneys vacation. This may be implemented as soon as trial court administrators develop procedures. ODYSSEY is not programmed to notify court assistants when an attorney is scheduled to appear in another New Hampshire court, in conflict with a hearing being scheduled. This feature will demand substantial processing power; Tyler may charge a fee for development of this functionality.
2	Install public access computers.	*	*	*	*	*	*	We are installing public access computers as we deploy ODYSSEY in trials courts. Maintenance costs are included in budget request for FY 2009.
3	The Judicial Branch must fully utilize outcome and productivity measures available in ODYSSEY.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Judicial Branch is updating workload studies related to judges and non-judicial staff in the four trial court jurisdictions. As technical and trial court staff are available, we are defining data elements and preparing to collect information needed to support accountability measures in "CourTools," a system for measuring court performance developed by National Center for State Courts (NCSC).
4	Implement electronic filing and notification.	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	\$	\$	\$	The Administrative Office of the Courts contracted with the NCSC to facilitate a court technology long-range planning process and to assess our readiness for electronic filing and e-noticing.
5	Expand digital audio recording.	*	*	\$	\$	*	*	We have budgeted \$210,000 for expansion of digital audio recording in FY 2007. At the conclusion of that expansion, approximately 75 of 132 New Hampshire courtrooms will be equipped with digital audio recording equipment. We will assess the need to expand into smaller, less used courtrooms and request funds, as appropriate, in the next biennial budget.
6	Implement electronic scheduling.	Unavailable	*	\$	\$	*	*	See Recommendation # 1 above.
7	Appoint an Information Technology Advisory Board	*	*	*	*	*	*	As soon as the NCSC delivers its long-range Court Technology Plan, the Supreme Court will appoint an advisory board.
8	Develop comprehensive Information Technology Plan.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Office of the Courts contracted with the NCSC to facilitate the development of a long-range court technology plan for New Hampshire. The NCSC report is expected soon.
9	Permit court constituents to communicate through telephone, hard copy, email, or the Internet.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Business Process Enhancement Committee is recommending that clerk and register email addresses be published; the Committee is also recommending guidelines for email communications. Internet access is being installed as ODYSSEY is deployed.
10	Use technology to improve access to the courts.	See Pg.1, Rec. 10						We have included in our FY 08 budget request funds with which to hire a part-time web support person to upgrade website content. In addition, the Judicial Branch is considering a recommendation to encourage communication with clerks by electronic means.
11	Eliminate "cattle call" in court scheduling.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Probate Court is leading use of CourtCall to enable telephone conference hearings. The three Administrative Judges are reviewing trial court scheduling practices.

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1	Transition to full-time judiciary.	\$270,555	\$358,865	\$	\$	\$	\$	We have requested \$270,555 in FY 08 to convert five part-time judges to full-time status. The Judicial Council will soon release its report and recommendations concerning a full-time judiciary.
2	Increase training for judges and staff.	\$115,000	\$115,000	\$	\$	\$	\$	We have requested \$115,000 in FY 08 and the same amount in FY 09 to provide additional education and training opportunities for judges and staff.
3	Establish minimum continuing education requirements for judges and staff.	See Rec. 2 above.						Supreme Court Rule establishes continuing education requirements for judges, masters, clerks, and registers. The Judicial Branch Education Committee is considering requiring, and monitoring, continuing education for all Judicial Branch employees.
4	Determine whether staffing levels are adequate.	\$315,937	\$331,729	\$	\$	\$	\$	The National Center for State Courts completed its non-judicial workload study in October 2005. We have requested funds in FY 08 with which to fill ten vacant positions, consistent with NCSC report recommendations. We have also requested funds in FY 2009 with which to fill an additional nine vacant positions, also consistent with NCSC report recommendations. Analysis and updates of workload assessments are ongoing.
4a	Fund 19 existing full-time vacancies (10 FY 08 & 9 in FY 09)	\$370,753	\$695,159	*	*	*	*	See Above.
5	Establish outcome measures/performance metrics. Hire a Management Data Analyst to provide statistical reports and analyses.	\$74,150	\$77,858	*	*	*	*	We are requesting funds with which to hire a management data analyst who will report on outcomes and metrics. This position will support use of NCSC CourTools and ongoing work load assessments.
6	Establish personal performance review systems and evaluations in annual review.	\$148,300	\$348,505	*	*	*	*	We have requested funds in FY 08-09 to support salaries related to merit based reclassifications.
7	Human resources department should support evaluations, including remediation and corrective action.	*	*	\$63,852	\$67,045	*	*	Administrative Office of the Courts HR Department is conducting a training program in progressive discipline, remediation, and corrective action. We will consider adding additional HR professional staff in future biennial budgets to develop this subject.
8	Reward superior outcomes with promotions or salary increases.		See Rec. 6 above.					We have requested funds in FY 09 to support merit based promotions.
9	Reward employee performance.	\$204,903	\$213,912	*	*	*	*	We are requesting funds to convert our merit pay advancement schedule from 2 five year adjustments to 5 two year adjustments.
10	Evaluate staff morale.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Office of the Courts is surveying its employees to assess morale. Trial court administrative judges will review this project and will consider whether to implement in each jurisdiction.
11	Involve court staff in problem solving projects.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Council directed that each trial court site conduct a problem solving session involving judges and non-judicial staff, at least annually.
12	Review staff compensation structure.	\$74,150 See also 6, 9 Above.	\$74,150					We are requesting funds with which to 1) conduct merit pay advancement reviews on a two year cycle instead of a five year cycle; 2) provide entry level staff with the opportunity to earn promotions; and 3) additional funds for overtime in recognition of frequent workload spikes.
13	Provide adequate facilities for staff.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Office of the Courts is developing Court Facilities Standards for presentation to the Court Accreditation Commission.

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1	Provide training in sensitivity, bias, and court ethics.	See Rec. 2, Page 3	See Rec. 2, Page 3					The Judicial Branch Education Committee provided an ethics training program on May 19, 2006. We have requested additional funding for Judicial Branch education. The Judicial Branch Education Committee is planning a program on cultural awareness.
2	Conduct regular judge/staff meetings to recommend changes that improve public service.	*	*	*	*	*	*	The Administrative Judges have directed their presiding judges to conduct judge/staff problem solving sessions at least annually.
3	Include customer service, problem solving, and creative thinking in staff performance evaluations.	See Rec. 2, Page 3	See Rec. 2, Page 3					We have requested additional education funds and the Judicial Branch Education Committee has been asked to offer additional training in employee evaluations, to include customer service, problem solving, and creative thinking.
4	Develop outcome based performance objectives and specific measurable performance goals for all courts: hire Data Analyst.	See Rec. 5, Page 3		*	*	*	*	Concurrent with ODYSSEY deployment, we are developing ODYSSEY metrics and performance features, including time standards. With the hiring of a second management data analyst, we will be able to report on performance measures recommended in CourTools.
5	Develop reporting and review processes for quarterly and annual court management.	See Rec. 4 above	See Rec. 4 above	*	*	*	*	See Above.
6	Actively manage performance throughout the courts.	See Rec. 4 above	See Rec. 4 above	*	*	*	*	See Above.
7	Report annually on Judicial Branch performance of objectives and goals.	See Rec. 4 above	See Rec. 4 above	*	*	*	*	See Above.
8	Review and revise objectives, measurements, and management processes periodically.	See Rec. 4 above	See Rec. 4 above	*	*	*	*	The Judicial Branch Administrative Council will review progress in implementing CourTools annually and direct changes in efforts to measure performance.